METRO EXCLUSIVE

THE FIX ON BID-RIGGING

How the Liberals intend to clean up construction contracts metroNEWS

Ottawa metro

CHANTAL HÉBERT

There's no shelter from Trump's volatility, Trudeau learns

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Your essential daily news | THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2017

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BOOM

BOBBY RYAN IS THE HERO ONCE AGAIN IN SENS' 1-0 WIN OVER BRUINS — BRINGING THEM WITHIN A WIN OF ROUND 2

Game report, metroNEWS.ca

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

4-20 needed more than ever: Activists

MARIJUANA

Weed community isn't fully behind legalization plans

Drew May
For Metro | Ottawa

With marijuana legalization tabled — and ahead of April 20, as promised by the governing Liberals — some Ottawa activists say they aren't confident the new laws will reflect the concerns of the cannabis community.

Mike Foster, owner of Crosstown Traffic, a sponsor of Ottawa's 4-20 event, said there will be mixed emotions at the April 20 event on Parliament Hill.

"Some people are going to be celebrating this, what they perceive as a newfound liberation," Foster said. "Anyone who actually reads the whole document is going to realize there's not much there to celebrate."

Foster said he takes issue with the criminal punishments in the marijuana legalization bill. The proposed law says people can legally have up to 30 grams in public and grow up to four plants. He said the punishment for having more — the proposed calls for up to five years in jail — is too harsh.

"It doesn't look like anything to celebrate," he said. "Maybe the 420 is needed again more than ever as a protest."

Russell Barth, the event co-ordinator for 420 Ottawa 2017, said the local cannabis community has become more cynical since the government tabled legislation to legalize marijuana. He said he is also concerned about the punishments in legislation.

"We said, 'OK, we'll give them a chance' to see what their legislation is and then we're handed this turd pie."

Barth said the Ottawa 4-20 event is the "tip of the spear" because of its location on Parliament Hill.

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Longtime Fox News host Bill O'Reilly given the boot amid harassment complaints. **World**

Speaking up for abortion rights

Heather Mallick
Torstar News Service

One block away from Parliament Hill, even as Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai won over MPs in the House of Commons on April 12 by crying out for the rights of girls, a cruel and abhorrent scene was playing out on the street.

If you're in Ottawa, go to 65 Bank St. and see for yourself. Men, and a few elderly women, stand right outside the abortion clinic set up by the late Dr. Henry Morgentaler, all day, every day, and torment those entering.

They wear sandwich boards showing pictures of cut-up bloodied meat and signs saying, "Will you support my right not to be killed in the womb?" next to photos of fetuses. "Holding life sacred," one sign says.

No, they're holding sperm sacred, à la Monty Python, and they're still at it after all these years. B.C., Quebec and Newfoundland have bubble zones around their clinics. They are difficult and legally costly to obtain, and the Morgentaler Clinic in Toronto only got its zone after it was firebombed.

But in Ottawa, there isn't one.

The demonstrators are omnipresent and creepy, some unwell, and some threatening. A bylaw says they must be on the other side of the street. But they cross the street and stand next to the clinic doors, harassing patients, their companions, and staff.

Two male protesters stand outside the The Morgentaler Clinic with signs on Bank Street on a rainy Wednesday evening. HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

Not only do the Ottawa police not enforce the sidewalk bylaw, they react angrily when the clinic reports the infraction. They have threatened to charge clinic staff with obstruction or harassment if they continue to call for help, says Shayna Hodson, director of operations.

Even when helpful Ottawa police officers appear and make promises about safety, they mysteriously never show up again. Contacted by phone and email, Ottawa police did not respond to Torstar News Service's questions.

"Ottawa police make me respect Toronto police so much on this issue," says clinic owner Arlene Leibovitch. "They understand us and that we are part of community services, as they are."

It's a recipe for violence. Hodson is most worried about a young man we'll call N. who seems to follow directions of older protesters like the omnipresent "Cyril." N. was arrested on April 5 after he made it into the building.

There is security video of N. holding a large bottle of "holy water"— or gasoline or kerosene? — and a rosary, lifting his arms in prayer, kneeling, banging walls and doors, throwing the fluid and screaming at patients and staff, "You murderers." The use of accelerants by protesters is increasing. Last week a Toronto church was set on fire by a man using accelerant in a large water-dispensing bottle.

The clinic was evacuated. Later footage showed a security guard lifting N. up and carrying him out of the building. He was arrested and an elderly lady posted bond. He's out.

Hodson says antagonism among Canadian anti-abortionists is rising. Emboldened by Trump — who is trying to defund Planned Parenthood nationally — and various cruelties imposed on American women state by state, Canada is seen as "a lawless land of abortion," Hodson says.

Hodson says the demonstrators on the clinic sidewalk endanger patients. When they're clustered outside the door, she doesn't know if they're domestic abusers waiting for patients to enter or waiting to punish them after they leave. Under Ontario's domestic violence laws, employers have to keep workplaces safe.

Canada no longer has a prominent voice for abortion rights. We need one. Abortion rights are shrinking as the anti-abortionists march, despite the partial access Ottawa has finally negotiated for women in New Brunswick, the (glacial) arrival of the abortion pill in Canada — it only works in very early pregnancies and is sparingly prescribed — and the fine work being done by Health Minister Jane Philpott. Some clinics are closing because it's too difficult to provide security and insurance and hire staff.

With a feminist prime minister, a gender-neutral cabinet, and good intentions, why are girls like this not protected from harm?

Women will always need abortions, as even the Harper government conceded on the floor of the House of Commons. Yet a few hundred metres away from our Parliament, staff in a small clinic worry that a violent man will make it through three levels of security and throw acid or gasoline.

As I left the Toronto clinic after my interviews, there were two gangly impossibly young girls sitting on the step whispering to each other. It's an old story. One girl needs an abortion; her best friend is there to stick up for her. Every clinic sees these gentle pairings daily.

It wrung my heart. With a feminist prime minister, a gender-neutral cabinet, and good intentions, why are girls like this not protected from harm?

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Feds set sights on corrupt construction contracts

INFRASTRUCTURE

Bill would open U.S. projects

A new federal agency designed to fuse public and private dollars to help build infrastructure in Canada could end up building new roads and bridges south of the border — so long as they connect to the Great White North.

The legislation for the Liberal government's proposed infrastructure bank would allow the arm's-length organization to use public money to help bankroll or financially backstop projects that are "in Canada or partly in Canada."

The wording means Ottawa could choose to fund projects with the potential to generate revenue for private investors or the government itself — toll roads or bridges, for instance, such as the Gordie Howe span between Windsor and Detroit, which is being financed with both private and public money.

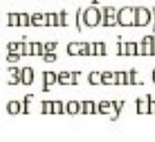
"If in fact a vehicle like the bank can enable projects like that to go ahead more readily, then I think that's positive," said Mark Romoff, CEO of the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships.

Romoff said it could also help advance Canadian interests south of the border, particularly at a time when U.S. President Donald Trump wants to leverage private money to pay for a $1-trillion infrastructure program.

The Liberals are infusing the bank with $35 billion in government funding, hoping that the money can leverage three or four times that much in private dollars to build infrastructure in three key areas: trade corridors, green infrastructure and public transit. THE CANADIAN PRESS

DEVELOPMENT

Competition bureau worries bid-rigging may cost millions



Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

The Trudeau government is spending tens of billions on transit, social housing and infrastructure projects across the country, but Canada's Competition Bureau worries those dollars won't stretch as far as they could because of rigged construction bids.

The bureau, the sole agency dedicated to investigating bid-rigging cases, may also not have the resources with more than $180 billion set to go out the door over the next decade.

Rigging occurs when contractors conspire in advance so as prices can remain high and everyone gets a few contracts.

"At some point there is a breaking point where we can't look into them all, given our resources — 60 or 70 people for the country," said Matthew Boswell, deputy commissioner with the bureau.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates bid rigging can inflate costs by up to 30 per cent. Given the amount of money the government is planning to spend, Boswell said, the practice could add up to hundreds of millions of dollars to the bottom line.

"I'm a taxpayer. My friends are taxpayers. My family are taxpayers. I don't want to see 30 per cent taken off the top because of successful bid rigging."

On Thursday, the Competition Bureau will announce a new partnership with the RCMP and Public Services and Procurement Canada to launch a hotline where people will be able to report bid rigging and other corruption in federal contracts.

Since cities will ultimately be the ones issuing tenders for most of these projects, Boswell said, they're helping them spot suspicious contracts.

"We're trying to educate people how to detect this and everyone has got to be vigilant."

He said the bureau has seen obviously questionable situations where two bids for a project are sent in the same envelope or with the same handwriting. More sophisticated examples of collusion are harder to spot.

According to briefing notes Metro obtained through access to information, the bureau's commissioner recommended a "big data" approach to help ferret out suspect bids as the government was rolling out its first infrastructure plan last year.

Boswell said such an approach could help track whether construction companies seemed to always win projects in particular regions or cities, or whether bids always split between a few companies evenly.

The bureau is working on a similar project with all federal contracts.

The government announced a comprehensive data collection project for the new infrastructure projects in last month's budget, but that measure appears to focus more on how effective infrastructure is.

Brook Simpson, press secretary to Infrastructure Minister Amarjeet Sohi, said the data-collection measure will help.

"With better data comes better decision-making and projects that are better planned and procured," she said.

She said that, generally, the government has audits and other measures to make sure the money is being well spent.

"We're committed to being vigilant in monitoring the use of taxpayer dollars and ensuring that procurements are fair, transparent and consistent with value for money principles."

30%
The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates bid rigging can inflate the cost of a construction project by up to 30 per cent
STOP

Construction projects are underway across the province, from bridges in Oakville to water main replacements in Toronto. PHOTOS METROLAND MEDIA

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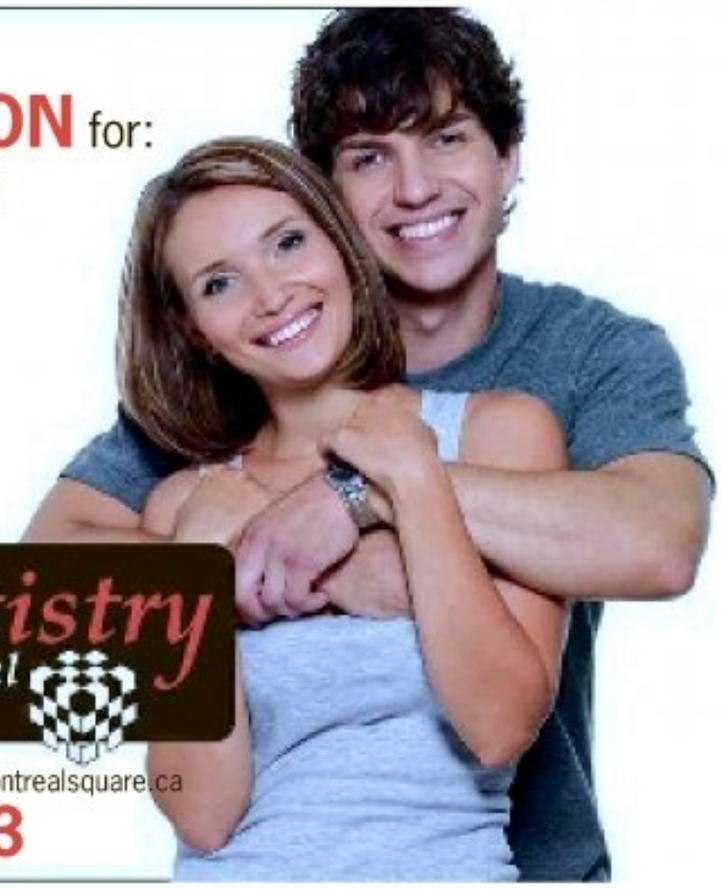

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Ottawa Police are investigating a suspicious fire at the Islamic Care Centre on Somerset Street West. This is the second time in a week that the centre seems to be the target of a hate crime.
ALEX ABDELWAHAB/METRO

Two attacks in one week

ARSON

Fire started at Islamic Centre seven days after window broken

Alex Abdelwahab
Metro | Ottawa

For the second time in a week, an Islamic community centre in Centretown has been the target of a possible hate crime.

Early Wednesday morning, someone piled debris against the back door of the Islamic Care Centre on Somerset, near Bank, and set it alight. The Ottawa police arson unit is investigating.

Around the same time, security footage shows, someone slipped a note through the centre's mail slot. The centre's executive director, Omar Mahfoudhi, said that he had not seen the contents of the note but was told by officers it was threatening.

Ottawa Police Const. Chuck Benoit confirmed a message was left behind around the time of the fire. He would not specify the message's contents.

Centre's public outreach supplies damaged Mahfoudhi said the fire happened beside the door to the centre's storage area and that water from the fire hoses damaged some of the supplies.

"That door is right next to the refrigerator that we keep the food in for the lunch bags for the homeless," he said. The centre provides free lunches on Saturdays to anyone who comes by, whether Muslim or not.

This is the second attack in a week. On April 12, a rock was thrown through the window of the centre's front door, Mahfoudhi said.

BYLAW REVIEW

Ottawa asks public about noises, fines

The City of Ottawa is holding public consultations for a noise bylaw review. In-person workshops and an online survey will be used to gauge public opinion.

Roger Chapman, the city's manager of bylaws and regulations, said in an email that public consultations enable "staff to understand the diverse needs and interests within the community and develop policy recommendations in a fair and balanced way."

The online survey asks users about a variety of noise-related topics, including increased fines for noise from motorcycles and other loud vehicles and new regulations for stadiums and festivals and potentially noisy activities such as construction and snow removal.

There are three upcoming public workshops: Apr. 25 at the Greenboro Community Centre, Apr. 26 at the McNabb Recreation Centre and May 1 at the Overbrook Community Centre. The online survey closes May 1.
TAMAR HARRIS/FOR METRO

AIR SAFETY

Drone was in flight's path prior to landing

Tamar Harris
For Metro | Ottawa

An Air Canada flight spotted a drone while approaching the Ottawa Airport Tuesday evening.

The crew of Air Canada flight 8975 reported seeing "an unmanned aerial vehicle or a drone" on approach to the Ottawa Airport, according to an emailed statement from Jazz Aviation LP spokesperson Manon Stuart. The plane, which took off in Montreal, landed safely in Ottawa at 5:18 p.m. according to FlightAware.

In a recording of the dialogue between the airport traffic control tower and pilot from LiveATC.net, the pilot said the plane had to avoid a drone near the plane's left wing.

"I don't think the sighting of the drones is unusual these days," said Coun. Jan Harder in an email. "It is a new phenomenon that people are enjoying.

> **I do think that seeing a drone in the flight path is concerning.**
> Coun. Jan Harder

However — I do think that seeing a drone, in the flight path of the runway which sees 75 per cent of flight traffic in and out of the Ottawa Airport, and over Barrhaven, home to 85,000 people, is concerning."

The government announced new safety initiatives for drones in 2016.

Transport Canada guidelines require drones to stay nine kilometres away from where aircraft take off and land. Recreational drone users cannot fly higher than 90 metres above the ground, or within restricted or controlled airspace.

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Cabbies launch lawsuit

RIDE-SHARING

Taxi driver union suing city over Uber legalization

The union representing taxi drivers in Ottawa is suing the city for allowing ride-sharing app Uber to operate and threaten their livelihoods.

In a lawsuit filed in the Ontario Superior Court on April 13 Unifor Local 1688 accuses the city of "acting in bad faith in the sense of being less than frank and transparent about its plans."

Taxi drivers Pierre Nakhle and Nega Haile are named in the filing. Both have been full-time cab drivers in the city for over 20 years.

Nakhle drives for Blueline and is the union president, while Haile owns his own taxi license and drives for Capital Taxi.

The lawsuit takes issue with the bylaw review the city undertook in May 2015. The cab drivers claim they were "promised" a "level playing field," but were disappointed when the city recommended to legalize Uber.

Taxi drivers protest against the ride-sharing service Uber during a rally on Parliament Hill in February 2016. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The lawsuit alleges that the new law disadvantages traditional cab drivers, who are still required to be individually licensed and own or rent a taxi plate.

They also say they weren't given enough notice of the new laws.

According to the city, Ottawa has 3,000 Uber drivers who have provided 1.4 million trips to residents since the company began legally operating in September.

The lawsuit claims that at least 80 per cent of those fares represent business taken away from taxi drivers.

Unifor is being represented by Dentons Canada LLP. The hearing date is set for Sept 21. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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HEALTH

Long-term-care needs more funding: Report

Drew May
For Metro | Ottawa

273
The number of additional full-time healthcare staff CUPE says is needed to meet a minimum standard of care for LTC residents.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) has called on the province to increase funding to long-term-care (LTC) residences ahead of next week's provincial budget.

In a report titled Time to Care, CUPE says LTC residences in Ottawa would require another 273 full-time health-care staff to meet a minimum standard of care for residents.

Bonnie Soucie, a registered practical nurse, said at the release of the report that the funding shortfall means residences are understaffed.

"It takes longer for the residents to get fed and to provide any meals for them," Soucie said. "There are appointments that get missed, there's work that remains undone because there's just not enough staff or hours in a day to do everything."

The report from CUPE says the problem of understaffing is caused by Ontario's aging population and the provincial government's plan to cut costs by removing patients from hospitals and putting them in LTC residences.

David Jensen, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, said the wellbeing of long-term-care residents is a top priority for the government. He said funding has increased almost $2 billion since 2003.

The Ontario budget is scheduled to be released on April 27.

> There are appointments that get missed, there's work that remains undone. Bonnie Soucie

REAL ESTATE

Province to unveil housing package

Ontario's highly anticipated package of housing measures is set to be announced today and will take aim at speculators, expedite more supply, tackle rental affordability and look at realtor practices.

The provincial Liberal government has been facing increasing pressure to cool the market in the GTA, where the average price of detached houses rose to $1.21 million last month, up 33.4 per cent from a year ago.

The intention of the package is to "give everyone some breathing space" in a frenzied market, Premier Kathleen Wynne said.

"What we're aiming to do is to bring in some initiatives that will help people in that whole continuum of housing right from rental through to purchasing a home without having unintended consequences," she said in Ottawa.

Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa has spoken frequently in recent weeks about going after speculators, who buy houses in the hope of turning a profit rather than to live in.

"We want to make sure that whoever is speculating is in fact paying their fair share," he said Wednesday. "That means those who are trying to take advantage of capital gains exemptions, shouldn't be. They should be paying income on those issues."

Sousa has been considering a tax on non-resident speculators, but he has declined to clarify what that could look like.

"As you know, there are a number of speculation activities within our market, by domestic and non-resident Canadians, so we're looking at what we should be able to do for the benefit of Ontario," he said.

The package will also deal with how to expedite the availability of housing supply, Sousa said, as the government has heard complaints from builders the process is too cumbersome.

Late last year, Ontario announced it would double the rebate on its land transfer tax for first-time homebuyers to $4,000 in an effort to help them enter the housing market. Under the new rules, which took effect on Jan. 1, first-time homebuyers don't pay any land transfer tax on the first $368,000 of a purchase price.

As of Monday, the province will require homebuyers to provide information about who they are, and how they intend to use the property, according to a post on a provincial government webpage. The information is being collected using the land transfer tax system. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NEWFOUNDLAND

ONLOOKERS FLOCK TO FERRYLAND FOR GLIMPSE OF ICEBERG

A large iceberg is visible from the shore in Ferryland, an hour south of St. John's, Newfoundland on April 10.

A towering iceberg stationed off Newfoundland's east coast is drawing dozens of people to the small shoreline community sitting in its shadow.

PAUL DALY/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

Clean-tech industry growing sluggishly

ENVIRONMENT

Feds too slow on investment, report warns

Growth in Canada's clean tech industry has slowed to the point that the sector could miss out on billions in revenue and thousands of new jobs without urgent government action, according to a report published Thursday.

Celine Bak, president of Analytica Advisors, a firm in Ottawa that monitors the industry and published the report, said investments to boost clean tech in the 2017 budget aren't moving fast enough. Without quick access to capital, many of the biggest players in Canada's $13-billion clean tech sector will fall behind global competitors, Bak said.

"There's an urgent need for the money you've proposed to be deployed," said Bak, referring to the Liberal government's 2017 budget pledge of $1.8 billion over three years for clean tech financing.

None of that money, however, is slated to roll out this year.

"It's back-end loaded and the need is really short term," Bak said. "That's not going to be sufficient, especially for the biggest firms that are in very competitive global markets, where we're talking about weeks — not months — as a timeline that needs to be executed upon."

The industry includes more than 850 firms in Canada that employ 55,200 people, the report says. These companies range from those working on more efficient power grid technology and cleaner ways to dig for oil, to recycling, transportation and agriculture.

The 2017 Canadian Clean Technology Industry Report, released Thursday, paints a picture of an industry that is still growing, but at a slower rate than previous years. Revenues in the sector jumped 8 per cent from 2014 to 2015, while they grew at around 11 per cent per year from 2011 to 2013.

> **There's an urgent need for the money you've proposed to be deployed.**
> Celine Bak

But profits retained by clean tech companies in Canada continue to drop, and the report says "the industry is awash in red ink and shareholder returns are negative." This includes companies working on low-carbon transportation, which have seen five straight years of negative returns in a developing sector that is vital in the push to meet Canada's global emissions targets for 2030, according to the report.

At the same time, the report says Canada's global market share in clean technology dropped 12 per cent from 2008 to 2015, when it stood at 1.4 per cent. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

DAIRY INDUSTRY

'Don't point the finger to Canada'

Jessica Botelho-Urbanski
Metro | Winnipeg

After a pointed shout-out from President Trump Tuesday, Manitoba dairy farmers fired back, calling his comments about Canadian dairy farming "very unfair" in their own right.

At a speech in Wisconsin, Trump criticized the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and blamed Canada for "some very unfair things (that) have happened to our dairy farmers."

David Wiens, a third-generation dairy farmer who lives and works near Grunthal, Man., said Trump's claims are "certainly not fact."

Wiens, also the chairperson of Dairy Farmers of Manitoba, said dairy imports from the U.S. into Canada have increased 17 per cent in the last year.

He emphasized Canada's domestic dairy policy doesn't affect international trade.

Lisa Dyck, a dairy farmer and ice cream producer with Cornell Creme near Anola, Man., said she was confident the Canadian government would stick by its dairy producers. She said Trump's comments didn't concern her.

"I think he just says a lot of things without thinking of the consequences," Dyck said. "I think it's great that he's behind his farmers — he should be. But he needs to look at this as a whole."

"In the end, we're all farmers. We understand. We are sad that they don't have a place for their milk, but we didn't do this… (so) don't point the finger to Canada," she said. "I hope they find a solution to their problem, I really do. But to point this at Canada, it's very unfair."

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BROADCAST

Allegations of harassment and payouts brought to light

Bill O'Reilly THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bill O'Reilly has lost his job at Fox News Channel following reports that five women had been paid millions of dollars to keep quiet about harassment allegations.

21st Century Fox issued a statement Wednesday that "after a thorough and careful review of the allegations, the company and Bill O'Reilly have agreed that Bill O'Reilly will not be returning to the Fox News Channel."

He had been scheduled to return from a vacation next Monday. It marks a stunning end to a near-perfect marriage between a pugnacious personality and network. For two decades, O'Reilly has ruled the "no spin zone" with cable news' most popular show, and his ratings had never been higher.

In a memo to Fox staff on Wednesday, the Murdochs said the decision followed an extensive review done in collaboration with an outside counsel.

Fox said that Tucker Carlson's show would move to 8 p.m. to replace O'Reilly and that the panel talk show The Five would take Carlson's time slot at 9 p.m.

The fast-moving story took shape with an April 2 report in The New York Times that five women had been paid a total of $13 million to keep quiet about unpleasant encounters with O'Reilly, who has denied any wrongdoing. Dozens of his show's advertisers fled, even though O'Reilly's viewership increased. O'Reilly has denied wrongdoing.

Even though at least one of the harassment cases against O'Reilly dated back more than a decade and was widely reported then, the accumulation of cases outlined in the Times damaged him much more extensively. It wasn't clear when those stories would end, with a group of women demonstrating in front of Fox's headquarters Tuesday and another woman, a former clerical worker at Fox, calling a harassment hotline and accusing the host of boorish behaviour.

"I'm not going away," said Lisa Bloom, attorney for the latest accuser and another woman who alleges her career stalled because she spurned O'Reilly's advances. "My phone is ringing off the hook."

O'Reilly's attorney, Marc Kasowitz, charged that his client was being subjected to a "brutal campaign of character assassination" and that there is a smear campaign orchestrated by far-left organizations bent on destroying O'Reilly for political and financial reasons.

O'Reilly's fans aren't likely to be happy about him losing his job, particularly on a controversy set in motion by the Times. His show's viewership increased the week after the story appeared — O'Reilly didn't address it on the air — and has sunk since he left for vacation. Potential successors like Dana Perino, Eric Bolling and Greg Gutfeld have substituted for O'Reilly since he left for vacation.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VENEZUELA THE 'MOTHER OF ALL MARCHES' A demonstrator walks along a barricade set up during opposition protests in Caracas, Venezuela, on Wednesday. Opponents of President Nicolas Maduro called on Venezuelans to take to the streets on Wednesday for what they dubbed the "mother of all marches" against the embattled socialist leader. Government supporters are holding their own counter demonstration. FERNANDO LLANO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

McDonald's order trips up Facebook slaying suspect

Facebook slaying suspect Steve Stephens was undone by a 20-piece Chicken McNuggets and an order of fries.

The man who police say shot a Cleveland retiree at random and posted video of the killing on Facebook was recognized by the drive-thru attendant of a McDonald's restaurant outside Erie, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday morning.

The worker called 911, and state police gave chase. It ended a few miles away when police bumped Stephens' car to get it to stop. Authorities say Stephens then shot and killed himself.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INAUGURATION

Huge indeed: $107M in donations

It was huge. Big money from billionaires, corporations and a roster of NFL owners poured into Donald Trump's inaugural committee in record-shattering amounts — to pull off an event that was lower-key than previous inaugural celebrations.

That leaves a bit of a mystery: What the $107 million was spent for and how much was left over — the excess, if any, to go to charity. It also raises a new round of questions about the influence of money in politics, this time for a president who promised to "drain the swamp" of Washington.

Contribution records from Trump's inaugural committee, released Wednesday by the Federal Election Commission, show the president who railed against the corrupting influence of big-money donors was only too willing to accept top-dollar checks for his swearing-in festivities.

Trump's total take was about double the previous record set by Barack Obama, who collected $53 million in contributions in 2009, and had money left over to spend on the annual Easter egg roll and other White House events. Trump's top inaugural donor was Las Vegas gambling billionaire Sheldon Adelson, who gave $5 million. He and his wife came away with prime seats for Trump's swearing-in ceremony on Jan. 20 and gained access to a private lunch with the new president and lawmakers. Phil Ruffin, another casino mogul and close friend of Trump, was among dozens of donors who gave $1 million each.

At least eight NFL team owners kicked in big money for the inauguration. Seven of them, including Patriots owner Bob Kraft, whose team won the Super Bowl and visited the White House Wednesday, gave $1 million apiece.

Trump plans to name the New York Jets' Woody Johnson, one of those million-dollar donors, to be the country's ambassador to the United Kingdom.

Asked whether the president feels conflicted about his committee accepting so much corporate and wealthy donor money, spokesman Sean Spicer said that financing the inaugural is "a time-honoured tradition" and there are "a lot of people who really take pride in helping us show the world a peaceful transformation of power."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Public dime could pay for U.S. projects

FUNDING

Bill would lift curbs on infrastructure bank proposal

A new federal agency designed to fuse public and private dollars to help build infrastructure in Canada could end up building new roads and bridges south of the border — so long as they connect to the Great White North.

The legislation for the Liberal government's proposed infrastructure bank would allow the arm's-length organization to use public money to help bankroll or financially backstop projects that are "in Canada or partly in Canada," provided there's a financial benefit and a physical connection to the country.

The wording means Ottawa could choose to fund projects with the potential to generate revenue for private investors or the government itself — toll roads or bridges, for instance, such as the Gordie Howe span between Windsor and Detroit, which is being financed with both private and public money.

"If in fact a vehicle like the bank can enable projects like that to go ahead more readily, then I think that's positive," said Mark Romoff, president and CEO of the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships.

Romoff said it could also help advance Canadian interests south of the border, particularly at a time when U.S. President Donald Trump wants to leverage private money to help pay for a promised $1-trillion infrastructure program.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The infrastructure bank could fund cross-border projects such as bridges between Windsor and Detroit. THE CANADIAN PRESS

BROADCASTING

Fewer Canadians are watching TV: Report

A new report says the number of Canadians cutting the cord on their TV services is expected to increase this year.

The Convergence Research Group estimates in a report released Wednesday that TV subscriptions in Canada will drop by 247,000 this year, up from 220,000 subscriber losses last year.

That would represent an annual drop of two per cent, and the consulting firm says that decline is expected to grow by three per cent in 2019.

The report estimates 3.8 million households or 26 per cent did not have traditional TV services at home last year and projects that will rise to 4.18 million or 28.4 per cent this year. Canada's telecommunications providers have been racing to add next-generation TV services such as streaming to retain TV customers.

26%

The report estimates 3.8 million households or 26 per cent did not have TV services at home last year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

150 WAYS of looking at Canada

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KAREN MOELLER

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CHANTAL HÉBERT ON TRUMP TAKING ON CANADA

Somewhat predictably, no amount of prime ministerial appeasement is turning out to be enough to keep Canada on the good side of the Trump White House.

Ever since last fall's American presidential election campaign, Justin Trudeau has played nice with Donald Trump, routinely bending over backward to avoid taking the new administration head on.

Parsing the prime minister's comments on Trump's eventful first three months one would be hard-pressed to find anything but kind words about the new occupant of the White House.

When the president moved to suspend the American refugee program and to ban citizens from six Muslim majority countries from travelling to the U.S., Trudeau issued a tweet to restate Canada's pro-refugee policy but refrained from openly criticizing the U.S. move.

When Trump cut foreign aid funding for contraception and family planning programs, the Canadian government raised its own contribution but otherwise kept its peace.

Ditto as the American administration confirmed its determination to walk away from the Paris treaty on climate change.

Earlier this month, the prime minister offered Canada's full support for Trump's unilateral decision to launch airstrikes on a Syrian military facility in retaliation for the regime's chemical gas attack on civilians. In the process, Trudeau soft-pedalled his party's long-standing commitment to multilateral international action. A few days later, the prime minister called for the removal of the Bashar Assad regime.

There is plenty of evidence that Trump is, to put it politely, a chameleon-type of politician.

Somewhat predictably, no amount of prime ministerial appeasement is turning out to be enough to keep Canada on the good side of the Trump White House and off the president's ever-changing hit list.

On Tuesday, he lashed out at NAFTA in general and Canadian dairy policy in particular. "In Canada, some very unfair things have happened to our dairy farmers, and others, and we're going to start working on that," Trump told a Wisconsin audience. "NAFTA has been very, very bad. We're going to make some very big changes or we're going to get rid of NAFTA once and for all," he added.

Contrast that with what the president had to say on the heels of his first face-to-face meeting with Trudeau less than two months ago and consider that there were no major public disagreements between the two governments over the interval.

"We have a very outstanding trade relationship with Canada. We'll be tweaking it," Trump opined in mid-February. "We'll be doing certain things that are going to benefit both of our countries."

At the time, that statement was greeted with jubilant relief in some Canadian quarters. That jubilation was somewhat premature.

Anyone professing surprise at the sight of the U.S. president blowing hot and cold on the same issue over a matter of weeks has not been keeping track of Trump's first three months in the White House.

There is plenty of evidence that he is, to put it politely, a chameleon-type of politician. Trump tends to blend his rhetoric to his environment, as often as not to the detriment of consistency.

But if anyone still harboured the delusion that a nascent bond between Trudeau and Trump would shelter Canada from this president's volatile approach to policy-making, this week's developments should have settled the issue.

FRENEMIES Justin Trudeau has been playing nice with Donald Trump since he took office, but there is no shelter from the president's volatility, writes Chantal Hébert. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crafting alliances on Capitol Hill and in the states' legislatures — as Canada has been attempting to do as part of an all-hands-on deck political lobbying operation — may not be as glamorous as spending a night at the theatre with Ivanka Trump but it may yield more reliable results.

So far, Trudeau's velvet glove approach to the Trump administration enjoys widespread support in this country. But that comes with the underlying assumption that the glove is not an empty one and that an iron hand will manifest itself in defence of Canada's interests.

That did happen on Tuesday. In a strongly worded letter, Trudeau's envoy to Washington, David MacNaughton, refuted Trump's contention that Canada's dairy policy was wreaking havoc on American dairy farmers.

Still, up to now Canada's efforts on the U.S. front have unfolded on a rare bipartisan basis. Former prime minister Brian Mulroney has been providing Trudeau with insider advice on American trade dynamics. Conservative interim leader Rona Ambrose has struck a supportive role in her own visits to the U.S., as has Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall, a premier otherwise known as the prime minister's chief provincial critic.

But there are trade issues on which it will be difficult to continue to present a united front as the war of words turns into a full-fledged negotiation. Canada's dairy and poultry supply management system is not far from the top of the divisive list.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

New pot laws must include a pardon for old convictions

Vicky Mochama
Metro

We cannot have a future pot policy that doesn't deal with criminalized pasts.

Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale has said that the new pot legislation will not include any special amnesty for past convictions.

This is a mistake.

The government's proposed legislation follows a public health approach of reducing harm and preventing problematic drug use. But the legislation, which is slated to come into effect by July 1, 2018, cannot just serve future drug users — and businesses, for that matter. It should also serve the health and wellbeing of the young, racialized men and women who are currently in court and in prison on drug charges.

According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, nearly 60,000 Canadians are arrested for possessing 30 g or less of cannabis every year — that's nearly three per cent of all arrests. And at least half a million Canadians have a criminal record for possessing that much pot.

In 2013, nearly half of all drug-related court cases involved cannabis, and young people between 12 and 24 were more likely to be arrested for pot than for any other drug.

The Justice Department either doesn't publish or does not track drug-offences by the race and ethnicity of the offender. Anecdotally, however, it's clear that the imagined drug offender is a racialized person.

One only has to hear it from Bill Blair, the Liberal government's point man on the pot file. In his telling, when youth buy marijuana, they get it from "a gangster behind some apartment building" or "a criminal in a stairwell," he told the Toronto Star on separate occasions.

In case the dog-whistle isn't loud enough, Toronto's former top cop is selling the government's pot plan with a racially-charged message.

There is ample data to show that black and white people, on a percentage basis, use marijuana at nearly the same rates. Yet black users are arrested at a vastly higher rate. (Much of this data is American. Yet again we find that data on race is patchy at best in Canada.)

Evidence of this racial arrest gap can be found in our prison populations. From 2005 to 2015, the black inmate population grew by 69 per cent. This increase dovetails with the previous Conservative administration's tough-on-crime legislation that also led to an increase in the imprisonment of women and Indigenous people.

But if compassionate pardons are not part of the new legislation, thousands of Canadians — especially young racialized men and women — already languishing in the criminal justice system will be left behind. A majority of male prisoners struggle with addiction and substance abuse issues.

For the government, a clean slate starts next Canada Day. Many Canadians need that clean slate now.

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metro LIFE

Your essential daily news

Calvin Klein hires 73-year-old model and actress Lauren Hutton to model underwear

We don't *really* know our rivers

EARTH DAY

Water demand and pollution are growing threats: Author

Canada has an incredible wealth of fresh water, much of it in rivers — from rushing giants like the Niagara and Yukon River to the swimming hole in your neighbourhood.

After 10 years studying rivers, Sean Fleming, hydrologist, data scientist and adjunct professor at UBC's department of earth, ocean and atmospheric sciences, has come to a conclusion: we don't know enough about rivers. And if we aren't informed, we can't protect them. Fleming's new book, Where the River Runs: Scientific Reflections on Earth's Waterways, aims to fix that. We asked him what we can do to help rivers run better.

Is there anything in your research that would surprise people who don't know much about rivers?

The example folks in Canada may not be aware of is the Colorado River. The Colorado River Compact was put together in the early 1900s to divide the waters of the Colorado River between different states and Mexico. It was derived on the basis of the data available at that point. As a matter of sheer bad luck, that period of time happened to be one of the wettest periods in several hundred years. That wasn't discovered until the 1970s. Because of that, the Colorado River no longer flows to its mouth. Knowing more about the science of rivers has real, serious implications.

What needs to be done to protect rivers?

One: We need to understand how rivers work. We need better models for simulating what they'll look like in the future, and how climate changes will affect them. That provides the information we need to make decisions. Secondly, reducing needs. Global water demand is expected to increase by 55 per cent by 2050. That's a huge problem, given that a billion people already do not have access to adequate clean water. But there's a silver lining. For example, in the U.S. water demand has stabilized at 1970s levels.

Is it the same story in Canada?

Canada's track record with water management is not the best compared to other western countries. And that's simply because we're really lucky — we've got a lot of empty space and a lot of water.

Vancouver for instance, is a very wet part of the world. It wouldn't seem like you'd ever run into water supply issues, but it's happening, because you've got such a tremendous congregation of people in such a small area, and the water is seasonal. That's going to be a huge challenge.

What can individual people do for rivers?

There's a tremendous amount you can do. There are watershed clean-up days. You can get involved with riparian planting (restoring trees and vegetation around rivers). In terms of your personal choices, watch what you flush down the drain and how you dispose of things like paint. It can help a great deal at the local level.

Do you have a favourite river?

Oh my goodness. Maybe the Cowichan in British Columbia or the Rio Grande in the U.S. southwest. I love the landscapes around both of them. They both present a lot of opportunities and challenges.

SALMON RUN

You have a chapter about how clouds talk to fish. What?

Weather literally transmits data to fish species (living in rivers). When it rains, river levels go up. That affects ecological systems. One example is salmon runs on the west coast. If the fall rains come too late or they're too weak, the river levels will not rise enough for salmon to make a successful spawning run. Conversely, if it's too stormy in the winter, it can excavate the fish eggs out of the creek bed.

Canada has a wealth of rivers, B.C.'s magnificent Fraser River being one of them, but Sean Fleming argues Canadians don't know enough about this type of body of water. ISTOCK

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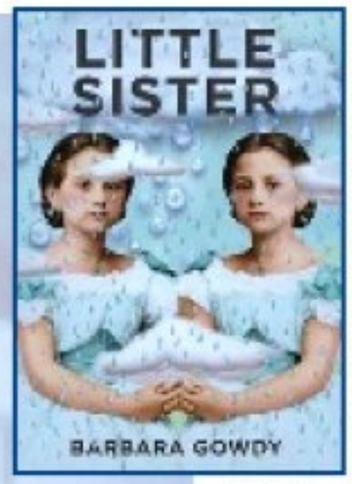
‘What would it be like to be you?’

PERSPECTIVE

Little Sister transports a woman into another body

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada



Little Sister is author Barbara Gowdy’s first novel in a decade. She wrote it while suffering from debilitating back pain, lying down in bed using a reclining chair for her laptop. CONTRIBUTED

Last fall, after Barbara Gowdy discovered a lump in her breast, her younger sister Mary offered to drive her to Toronto’s Prince Margaret Hospital for a series of tests. As Gowdy was filling out forms, Mary suddenly fell to the floor in a seizure, caused by a massive brain haemorrhage. If Mary hadn’t been in that hospital room at that exact moment, feet away from an oxygen tank and doctors to rush her into surgery, she would not have survived. Gowdy — now in remission after radiation and a lumpectomy — says it was her cancer that saved her sister’s life.

Later that fateful day, after undergoing a core biopsy and being reassured that her sister was doing well in another hospital, an exhausted Gowdy came home to a box sitting on her Cabbagetown front porch. The box was labelled “Little Sister,” and for a shocking moment the author forgot that was the title of her much-anticipated new novel, her first publication in a decade.

It would be understandable if Gowdy wrote about the cruel limitations of the human body. On top of the breast cancer, she has suffered 14 years from a mysteriously debilitating chronic back pain that limits her mobility. Most of Little Sister was written lying down in bed using a reclining tray for her laptop, while undergoing a litany of unsuccessful drug therapies that did little more than make her foggy and depressed. But Gowdy’s curiosity about our inner lives runs deeper than skin and bones. Since she can remember, she has asked the fundamental question: “What would it be like to be you?”

Little Sister, which takes place over a week, follows Rose, a 30-something woman who lives a mundane existence running a repertory theatre with her mother, who suffers from progressive dementia. When a series of freak lightening storms hit the city, Rose’s migraine-like symptoms inexplicably transport her inside the body of a stranger named Harriet, who is having an affair with a married co-worker. This erotic experience is a far cry from the dullness of Rose’s own relationship with Victor, an older, serious-minded meteorologist. No wonder Rose becomes almost physically obsessed to re-enter Harriet, who may also have an otherworldly connection to her deceased younger sister.

Gowdy suggests that her ongoing existential preoccupation with how others see the world may be connected with some discomfort she has with her own self. “I’m always curious about how people cope. It seems very touching to me,” she says. “There’s that saying, ‘Walk a mile in my shoes,’ but I was thinking, ‘Walk a mile in my body, spend an hour in my mind.’”

In writing Harriet, who is described as “kinetic” and the opposite of staid Rose, Gowdy purposely held back on exposing the character’s thoughts. She wanted the book’s strange occurrences to remain as much a mystery to readers as they are to Rose, and to avoid a re-tread of the 1999 Spike Jonze movie Being John Malkovich. “I wanted her to inhabit the body more. It wasn’t just ‘what it would be like being you,’ and ending there, it’s ‘what is it like to be you and then come back to me,’” she says.

Over her lauded career and eight books, Gowdy has been dubbed a risk-taker in Canadian literature, whether it’s for exploring the inner worlds of elephants in the Giller Prize-nominated White Bone or for her empathetic portrayal of a necrophiliac in the 1992 story collection We So Seldom Look on Love. But she doesn’t necessarily buy that risk-taking label. Gowdy suggests perhaps it’s because she never writes the same book twice: she inhabits her characters, and then moves on.

“Once I’m done with a certain voice or point or view, I’m really done,” she says.

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

Gossip DIGEST

SEQUELS

Apatow gets sicker

Judd Apatow likes is putting together a sequel to his bestselling Sick in the Head, which featured conversations with big-time comedians. The new book, called Sicker in the Head, includes Norman Lear, Kevin Hart and Whitney Cummings. No release date has been set. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AWARDS

Smith wins emerging writer prize

Saskatchewan’s Cassi Smith is the newest recipient of the RBC Taylor Emerging Writer Award.

She was selected for the honour by bestselling author Ross King, who won the RBC Taylor Prize last month. In addition to the $10,000 cash prize, Smith will receive mentorship from King with the goal of progressing towards creating the first draft of her work. THE CANDIAN PRESS

PARENTING

Netherlands’ pursuit of happiness begins at home

What if the key to raising contented kids lies not in priming our children for success, but rather in encouraging their happiness so they can find their own version of achievement?

That’s the approach embraced by parents in the Netherlands, which is, according to a 2013 UNICEF report, home to the happiest children from among the 26 richest nations in the world.

A new book called The Happiest Kids in the World: How Dutch Parents Help Their Kids (and Themselves) by Doing Less explores what makes the Dutch approach to parenting different. The co-authors, American Rina Mae Acosta and Brit Michele Hutchison, both married Dutch men and are raising their kids in the Netherlands.

I spoke to Acosta recently about what defines the Dutch style of parenting.

You write that Dutch parents have a healthy attitude toward their kids, seeing them as individuals rather than as extensions of themselves, and that achievement doesn’t necessarily lead to happiness, but that happiness can cultivate achievement. Why is that such an important distinction?

Us modern parents all throughout the world, especially in America, we believe that in order to be happy in life, you have to be successful. But the Dutch have realized that happiness comes first before anything else. And when I’m talking about happiness I’m not talking about children being spoiled and entitled. I’m talking about children who are self-aware, who are able to be independent and who learn to make their own decisions. And children who are allowed to be children and to figure out their own passions in life early on and allowed to be who they are.

Apparently Dutch babies get more sleep. What is the deal there? How do they do it?

What most parents can actually do is simply have what the Dutch call the two “Rs” — rest and regularity. The basic idea is — especially for newborns, babies and toddlers — to create a calm, predictable environment with a certain set schedule of sleep, play and eat. And once you have those established, you can help regulate their sleep.

Dutch children are apparently among the least to feel pressured at school. Why is that?

Michele Hutchison, centre, and co-author Rina Mae Acosta, right, each married Dutch men and raise children in the Netherlands. ROSA VAN EDEREN

It’s just a whole different perspective on what a child is, I believe. While we obviously have to educate children, in the Netherlands they realize that what’s most important in preschool is to teach children how to play. That includes focusing on their social and emotional development. That’s a critical foundation to build. Then you can start teaching them academically at six, seven, eight. Versus in America: I’m afraid that we’ve forgotten the importance of play. Rather than focusing on that, there’s a lot more focus on academics. But a lot of education researchers agree that an immature brain is not ready yet to take it all in. Interesting the children who are allowed to develop at their own pace are the ones who are allowed to have that intrinsic motivation to succeed.

It’s interesting that while the Netherlands offers several types of high school, there doesn’t seem to be much gnashing of teeth over which one a child goes to.

No, the Dutch realize that not every single person is meant to go to university. Not everyone is meant to be a doctor, a lawyer or a high-level professional. Some are actually meant to become nurses or teachers or chefs. And they realize that every child has their own special talent or special interest, so why is there a need to make every child conform to the status quo?

What do you most wish that parents living in Canada, or other parts of the world with similarly intense approaches to raising kids, will take away from this book?

Please be kind to yourself as a parent. Know that you doing your best is good enough. If you’re more forgiving of yourself and accepting of all your mistakes, and also congratulate yourself for the things you are doing really well, the children will see that.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Gossip RAIDS, AWARDS AND BEAUTY

CRIME

Intruder inside Drake's home only raided the fridge

Authorities say an intruder was arrested at Drake's Southern California house, but the woman apparently did nothing but drink the rapper's water and soda pop. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department says deputies from its Malibu/Lost Hills Station arrested 24-year-old Mesha Collins Monday inside the home of the Toronto-raised rapper. Deputies called to the house found Collins inside a locked room surrounded by opened water and soda bottles from the house. There was no evidence she took anything else or did any damage. She was arrested for entering a residence with intent to steal the victim's property. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AWARDS

Shad is a Peabody Award winner

Rapper Shad's docu-series examining the history of hip hop music has been honoured with a Peabody Award. In the four-part series Hip-Hop Evolution, the former host of CBC's Q walks viewers through decades of memories integral to popular music history. Shad revisits the streets of Bronx and Harlem alongside seminal figures like Afrika Bambaataa, Kurtis Blow and Chuck D. Hip-Hop Evolution was among 12 documentaries selected as distinguished productions by the Peabody jury, which is made up of media industry professionals, media scholars, critics and journalists. They said its music doc winners represented "histories of music integral to American culture." Hip-Hop Evolution debuted last year on HBO Canada and on Netflix outside of the country. Other Peabody documentary winners included Ava DuVernay's 13th, which was produced by Winnipeg-born Howard Barish, and Oscar winner O.J.: Made in America.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

HONOURS

Julia Roberts is more than a Pretty Woman

People magazine has named Julia Roberts the "World's Most Beautiful Woman" for a record fifth time. The magazine announced Roberts' selection on Wednesday. The 49-year-old actress has previously claimed the cover spot in 2010, 2005, 2000 and 1991. Roberts, who won an Academy Award for Erin Brockovich, says she is "very flattered" by the experience. People's 28th annual "World's Most Beautiful" double-issue will be on newsstands Friday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

25 years later, only the riot gear has changed

THE SHOW: L.A. Burning (A&E)
THE MOMENT: The riot begins

Executive producer of L.A. Burning John Singleton. CONTRIBUTED

April 29, 1992. Four Los Angeles police officers are acquitted of any criminal charges in the beating of Rodney King, even though a videotape was viewed by the world. Disbelieving, enraged protestors flood the intersection of Florence and Normandy streets.

Police try to quell the crowd. Two protestors are arrested. Furious onlookers begin smashing car windows and looting the corner liquor store. Lieutenant Michael Moulin orders his cops to pull out.

Photographer Bart Bartholomew, who is white, takes pictures of the cruisers pulling away. But in a cold second, the crowd turns on him. Someone smashes a two-by-four into his face, breaking his jaw. Neighbourhood resident Tim Goldman escorts Bartholomew to his car and waves away the protesters who jump on its hood. Bartholomew pulls away. But the riot continues for two days.

I lived in L.A. then, and it doesn't feel like 25 years ago; it feels like yesterday. But five separate docs have been made to mark the anniversary. This one, executive-produced by the director John Singleton, interviews participants about then and now.

What's chillingly obvious is that the racial profiling that set the protest aflame hasn't changed – witness the ongoing murders of black men by police. What's changed is the riot gear. Notorious L.A. police chief Daryl Gates grievously underestimated public anger in '92, and sent his cops in unprotected. That's the only mistake that police all over the U.S. have corrected.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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ST LAURENT

metro HOME

Your essential daily news

White Garden unveiled at Kensington Palace to honour 20th anniversary of Princess Diana's death

MEET THE CONDO

Mixed-use condo rose from the ashes

CONTRIBUTED

Project overview

Minto Beechwood is one of Ottawa's newest condominiums. The mid-rise condo with multiple businesses on the ground floor was built in place of several businesses that caught fire back in 2011. Six years on and the corner of MacKay and Beechwood is a vibrant area with plenty of ammenities.

Housing amenities

The building is certified LEED and boasts being energy and environmentally efficient. Finishes include designer cabinets, countertops and backsplash in the kitchen, as well as a fully-equipped fitness centre, games room and outdoor terrace with a fireplace and gas barbecues for residents' use.

Location and transit

Minto Beechwood is located just east of the downtown core. With King Edward Avenue just down the road, commuting to downtown or to Gatineau is effortless. Public transit is also available in front of the building, with multiple routes servicing downtown and the east end.

In the neighbourhood

The neighbourhood features a variety of quaint shops and restaurants and comes with the advantage of only being minutes away from the downtown core. Walking and biking paths are just steps away from the building and the Richelieu Community Centre is nearby.

JENNA GUILBEAULT/FOR METRO

NEED TO KNOW

What: Minto Beechwood
Builder: Minto
Architect: TACT Architecture Inc.
Designer: II BY IV DESIGN
Location: Corner of MacKay and Beechwood
Building: Condominium
Models: One and two bedrooms, some including dens
Sizes: From 718 to 2,059 square feet
Pricing: Starting at $321,900
Status: Now selling
Occupancy: Spring/summer 2017
Sales centre: No sales centre and model suites can be viewed by appointment only
Phone: (613) 696-8188
Website: mintobeechwood.com

GARDENS

Virtual tech helps you mock up your plot before digging in

Just as virtual technology has become a common tool for anyone planning to repaint or redecorate a home, a growing array of apps can make landscaping easier too.

"We've seen an increase in virtual interior design services within the last two years, so it's only natural that this functionality would make its way to the exterior of the home as well," said Stephanie Sisco, Real Simple magazine's home editor.

A few of the more popular DIY gardening apps include Garden Designer, Design your New Surroundings, Garden Plan Pro and Perennial Match.

"We have seen several hundred thousand downloads," says Patrick Pozzuto, founder of the iScape app, aimed at both professional and home landscapers. "Arranging plants using a touch screen is way easier than using your lower back to do it," he says.

"But while the pros have been using apps for a long time now, home gardeners do encounter some hiccups sometimes," he admits.

A design made in iScape.
CONTRIBUTED

"They don't necessarily know what plant goes with what, and what areas it'll grow in."

Dave Whitinger, executive director of the National Gardening Association, says that while some tech-savvy gardeners quickly get the hang of landscaping apps, the learning curve is steep and they may be impractical for most home gardeners.

The association, founded in 1971 and based in Jacksonville, Texas, helps put out the Gardening for Dummies book series and hosts the website garden.org.

"The reality is that while the virtual tools are great for a minority of gardeners, many more people find them far too confusing," he says. Many home gardeners, he says, would be better off using a pencil and graph paper, with each square representing 6 inches, or whatever scale is appropriate for the garden.

Yet even for amateurs, he notes, plant knowledge can mean the difference between failure and success with gardening and landscaping projects. Garden.org features a database, searchable by city, that gives the frost dates for an area and vegetable planting strategies and schedules for the spring and fall seasons.

"Knowledge like that is crucial to whether a person's gardening project succeeds," he says. "Just because you see the plants for sale in the nursery doesn't mean it's the right time to plant."

And even if you haven't figured out all the features of the gardening apps, they can be a good way to show professional landscapers what you have in mind, Pozzuto says.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

— ADVERTISING FEATURE —

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE DOWNSIZING YOUR HOME

The decision to downsize a home is often bittersweet.

Many couples who downsize their homes do so after raising a family. A home might be filled with memories, but downsizing helps couples save more money allowing them to more fully enjoy their retirement.

Besides the financial impact, the following are a handful of other factors homeowners should consider before downsizing to a smaller home.

REAL ESTATE MARKET

The real estate market can be a seller's friend or foe. Sellers often have a sale price in mind but the real estate market can be fickle, so homeowners should do their research before putting their home up for sale.

Will the current market make it easier to get the most for your home, or will you have to settle for less? How fast are similar homes in your area selling?

If you plan on moving into a condominium but the market is not flush with properties, you might end up paying more than you want to for your new home, which might negate the savings you can expect from downsizing.

FURNITURE

When downsizing, many couples realize their current furniture is unlikely to fit into a smaller home. Couples may have to sell or donate their current furniture and then purchase new furniture, you might be in for some sticker shock on your first visit to the furniture store.

Another thing to consider about furniture is which items you can't live without and which to pass down to your children and if they have room for it. Consider your attachment to certain items and the emotional toll that selling such items might take if you're left with no other options.

PROXIMITY TO FAMILY

Before downsizing, consider if you're willing to move further away from your family. Many couples move out of the suburbs and into cities or towns with more ready access to culture and restaurants. Grandparents may find that it comes at the cost of less time with their grandchildren.

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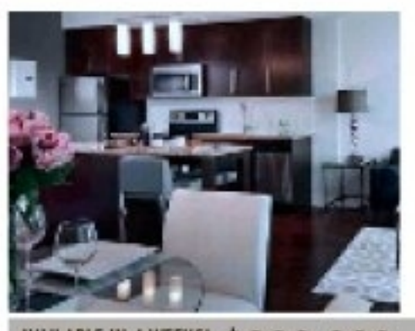

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Create a seamless outdoor space

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

How you use your space should reflect how you live your life

Jaclyn Tersigni

Designer Jennifer Hayman outdoor structures, as pictured here, are gaining popularity this season. JENNIFER HAYMAN

Thanks to an in-the-blood Canadian determination to spend as much time outdoors before winter returns, or perhaps the HGTV effect, the start of each spring season rouses up new visions and plans to make our outdoor spaces more beautiful, more livable and more entertaining than ever before.

No longer just a grassy patch for kids and canines to play on, or a spot for the barbeque, backyards and patios have become extensions of indoor living spaces, ones with their own trends and design principles.

Jennifer Hayman, founder of a namesake Toronto-based landscape design firm, and Kasia Waloszczyk, a designer and regular expert on the Marilyn Denis Show, both have plenty of experience creating beautiful and practicable spaces for both play and refuge.

Take note of their picks and tips for creating multi-functional, on-trend yards and balconies.

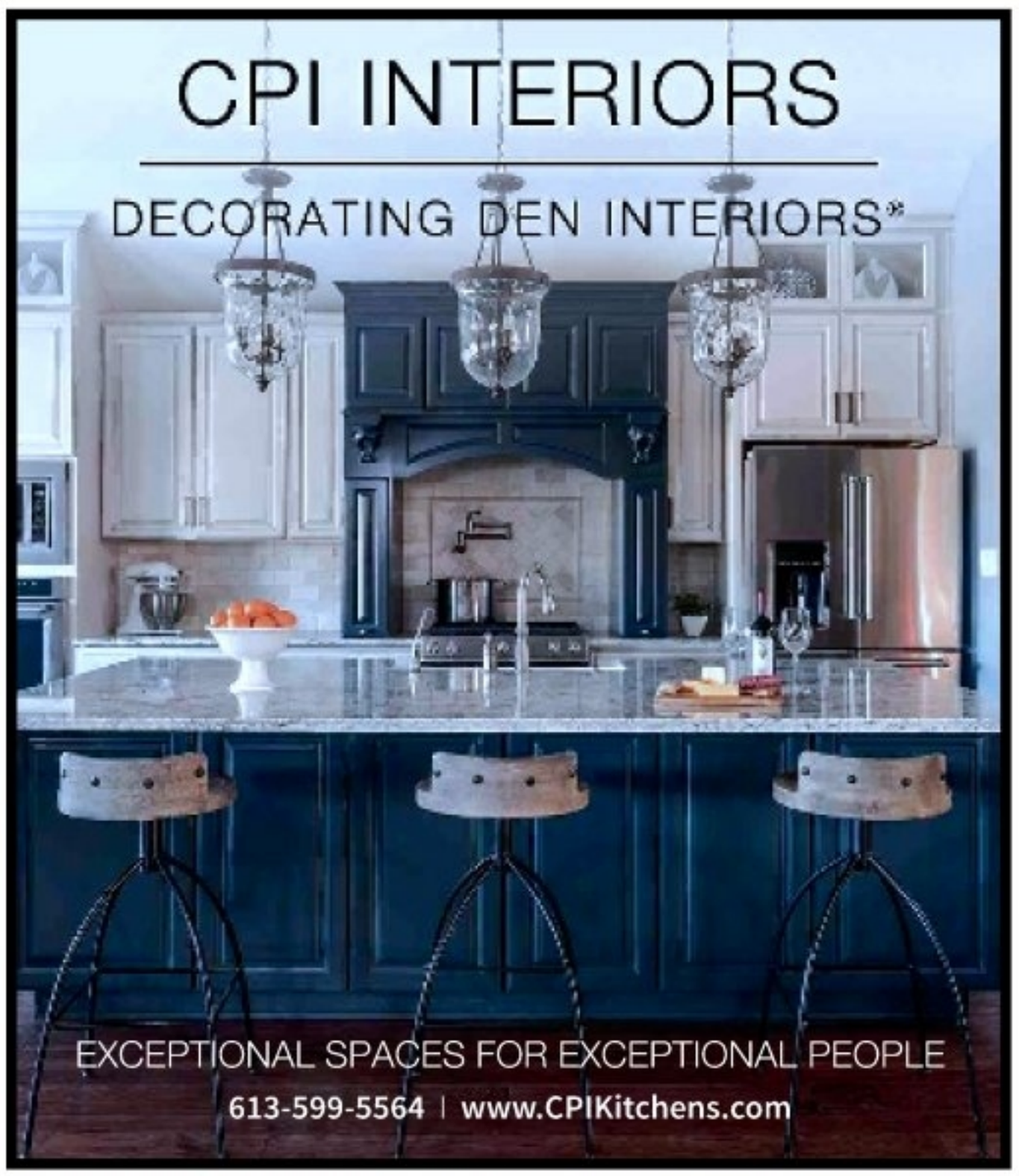
Bring your indoor decorating approach outdoors: Like the interior of a home, a well-designed outdoor space is comprised of the right furniture, lighting, textiles and decor, mixed together to achieve an aesthetic. "Layering is the biggest key," Waloszczyk advises. "The more layers you add the more comfy and cosy you'll feel outside. From adding rugs and proper furniture, to accenting with lanterns, pillows, textiles, and umbrellas."

Don't play it safe with your garden: When it comes to landscaping, "all contemporary gardens or all traditional gardens" are on their way out, says Hayman. "We have always blended the two, for a strong juxtaposition between old and new."

To keep your garden feeling of-the-moment this summer, Hayman suggests mixing contemporary and natural looks. Like "strong linear stone pathways with a modernist edge, softened by mass plantings that are naturalistic and less structured," she says. "Evergreens and shrubs are starting to become popular again, with organic boulders, water and fire features setting the stage for a rustic, personalized experience."

Prints aren't going anywhere: Flamingo and pineapple motifs, along with palm and banana leaf prints that tap into the Pantone colour of the year, Greenery, are making another strong showing this year. "They're dominant across the board, for every [retailer's] collection," Waloszczyk says. "It's a fun, whimsical look. Bold in colour, it's bright, happy and tropical, good for creating a tropical retreat." Incorporate the trend in your outdoor space with throw pillows, dining ware and decor. These prints "hold vibrant bold tones like pink, yellow and green, and [can be] accented with black and white," Waloszczyk adds.

If the tropical vibe isn't your thing, Waloszczyk says a coastal aesthetic, featuring seashell, beach and cottage motifs, hasn't gone away.



Make yours a patriotic garden this season

As spring nears and the bulbs start bursting into bloom across the country, gardens will be awash in red and white. Numerous initiatives saw thousands of red and white bulbs being planted last fall for Canada's 150th birthday. For example, the Canadian Garden Council awarded 150 "Celebration Gardens" consisting of 500 White Hakuun and 500 Red Impression Tulips, donated by Vesey's Bulbs, to each garden that was chosen. And Home Hardware sold out of its special red and white Canada 150 tulip.

In Niagara Falls, along the parkway, there are 30,000 red and white bulbs planted and the Canadian Tulip Festival is sure to feature some stunning displays.

If you didn't manage to plant tulip bulbs in the ground last fall, there are lots of annuals and perennials you can plant in the garden this spring. Local garden centres and nurseries will most certainly be highlighting their reds and whites and can help consumers choose the right plants for their garden. Mix and match in containers, create lush hanging baskets, or fill spaces in your ornamental gardens with a red and white medley of colour. Here are a few suggestions that you can add to your must-have list that you can bring with you when you shop.

Compact SunPatiens are a versatile hybrid series of impatiens that love the sun and heat. SUNPATIENS

To start, seed company Renee's Garden has created an exclusive birthday blend of Canada 150 birthday zinnias. The pollinator-friendly red and white blooms are easy to grow, will reach 3 to 3.5 feet tall, and will attract pollinators, from hummingbirds to butterflies and bees. Lure them to your edibles by planting them near your veggie garden.

Keep an eye out for Compact SunPatiens, a super versatile hybrid series of impatiens that love the sun and heat, but also the shade. These lovelies are also extremely disease-resistant and come in both red and white hues.

Calibrachoas look like miniature petunias and are self-cleaning — no deadheading required. They are heat tolerant and look great in containers. Proven Winners has some fabulous varieties, including the deep red Pomegranate Punch with eye-catching black in the centre and will be releasing a new Double Ruby Double Calibrachoa. Pair them with white supertunias, another great heat-tolerant choice.

Gerberas are often popular as houseplants, and you've probably received them in cut flower bouquets, but you can also find gerberas that can be planted in the garden. Maybe this is the year to create your own cutting garden, so you can harvest fresh blooms for vases. Look for the Garvinea series — Sweet Love is a new red variety and Sylvana has a lovely white bloom.

Whatever you decide to plant, be sure to read the tag for all the planting and care instructions to ensure you have a successful celebration garden.

TARA NOLAN

THIS SPECIAL REPORT WAS CREATED BY CONTENT SOLUTIONS, INDEPENDENT OF METRO EDITORIAL.

metro SPORTS

23-time Olympic gold medallist Michael Phelps says he's waiting till the worlds this summer to see if he gets "that itch again" to return to swimming

Home life a welcome distraction for some

2017 NHL PLAYOFFS
FIRST ROUND

Other players opt for hotels amid stress of post-season

Senators forward Tommy Wingels is among the players that prefers to share the playoff experience with his family. FRANCOIS LAPLANTE/FREESTYLE PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES

Crying kids and household chores don't stop for NHL players in the post-season.

But a few players who were asked if they'd rather stay in a hotel during the home end of their playoff series — a practice some teams have done over the years — said they'd prefer to be in their own houses.

"Personally, I'm not a fan of staying in a hotel," Ottawa Senators forward Tommy Wingels said.

"I like being at home and being around my wife and daughter. After thinking about nothing but hockey, it's kind of a nice distraction, not that they're a distraction if you know what I mean, but just to focus on something else.

"My wife is there for me all season and she supports me when things are going well, or not so well, so I just enjoy being around them. I want to share the playoff experience with them. I know it's not the same for some guys, but it's definitely my preference."

During the Chicago Blackhawks' run to the Stanley Cup in 2010, hotel rooms were available during home games, said former Hawks forward Troy Brouwer, who is now a Calgary Flame.

"Because there were so many people in town and so many people around, we put ourselves (in a hotel) not the night of, but the day of games," Brouwer explained.

"We came to practice in the morning, then you hopped on a bus and went to your hotel for your pre-game meal and pre-game nap, so you didn't have any distractions during the day. In our run last year in St. Louis, that's what we did as well during the day.

> **It might be a good way to get out of taking the garbage out though.**
> Clarke MacArthur

"Every team I think for the most part offers hotels if you would prefer them, if you have people in town or distractions.

"I think most of the guys feel comfortable at home being in their own bed. Part of what being at home is, is being with your family and enjoying home-cooked meals and being around your loved ones.

"You don't want to take that comfort level away.

Family and close friends usually know playoffs is the most important time in a player's career and will give him space. That cocoon doesn't always extend to childcare, however.

"Maybe a little bit more lenient in some cases, yeah, but no free passes," Brouwer said. "First and foremost, I'm still a dad." THE CANADIAN PRESS

OBITUARY

Officials say ex-Patriot hanged himself in cell

Former NFL star Aaron Hernandez hanged himself in the prison cell where he was serving a life sentence for murder, officials said Wednesday, the same day his ex-teammates on the New England Patriots visited the White House to mark their Super Bowl victory.

His death came just days after the 27-year-old was acquitted in a second murder case.

Guards found Hernandez just after 3 a.m., Correction Department spokesman Christopher Fallon said. The one-time tight end was pronounced dead at hospital about an hour later.

Hernandez had been housed in a single cell in a general population unit at the maximum-security state prison in Shirley, Mass. He tried to jam the cell door to prevent guards from opening it and hanged himself with a bedsheet tied to a window, Fallon said.

Aaron Hernandez GETTY IMAGES

Fallon said officials had no reason to believe Hernandez might take his life, and if they had had any such worries, he would have been transferred to a mental-health unit.

Later Wednesday, U.S. President Donald Trump welcomed the Patriots to the White House. Star quarterback Tom Brady did not join his teammates as the White House said it was notified the star QB was dealing with a "personal family matter." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CANADA'S SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Lanny McDonald was blindsided by honour

Lanny McDonald never saw it coming.

The Stanley Cup champion and Hockey Hall of Fame member was among nine individuals named for induction into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame on Wednesday. The announcement caught McDonald by surprise because for so long all of his achievements were recognized by hockey-specific organizations.

"I thought it was one of the guys pranking me when this came about but all of a sudden today happens and you realize, 'Oh my gosh,'" said McDonald.

"It's so cool. I'm so honoured and thrilled. What a great class to go in with." THE CANADIAN PRESS

TOP ATHLETES

Other athletes being inducted include Olympians Carol Huynh, Simon Whitfield and Cindy Klassen, golfer Mike Weir.

EDMONTON-SAN JOSE

Draisaitl's low blow nets maximum fine

Leon Draisaitl of the Oilers gets tangled up with the Sharks Justin Braun on Sunday in San Jose. GETTY IMAGES

Oilers forward Leon Draisaitl will be available for Game 5 against the San Jose Sharks.

The NHL announced on Wednesday that Draisaitl avoided suspension and will be fined for spearing Sharks forward Chris Tierney in the groin in Game 4 of the first-round series.

Draisaitl had a hearing with the league's department of player safety to determine any consequences. The infraction will cost him $2,569.44 US, the maximum allowable under the CBA.

> **0**
> **Draisaitl has yet to register a point in the playoffs.**

The incident occurred at 13:44 of the second period. Draisaitl was assessed a major penalty for spearing and a game misconduct. San Jose went on to a 7-0 win to even the series 2-2.

Draisaitl had just 20 penalty minutes in the regular season.

Edmonton hosts Game 5 on Thursday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Juventus advances past Barça in Champions League

Juventus made sure there were no more miracles at Camp Nou on Wednesday, as the Italian visitors held Barcelona to a 0-0 draw and advanced to the Champions League semifinals.

The second-leg stalemate sealed a 3-0 win on aggregate and came six weeks after Barcelona's historic 6-1 thrashing of Paris Saint-Germain, when the home side became the first team to ever overturn a 4-0 loss in the competition. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cubs walk off Brew Crew

Addison Russell hit a three-run walkoff homer off Neftali Feliz that capped a four-run ninth inning and lifted the Chicago Cubs over the Milwaukee Brewers 7-4 Wednesday.

Chicago trailed 4-1 in the sixth inning and 4-3 after Russell's run-scoring single in the eighth.

Wade Davis (2-0) worked around a walk in the ninth to win in relief of Kyle Hendricks, who tied his career-high with four walks in five innings. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Healthy ALT (Avocado Lettuce Tomato)

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Avocado adds a satisfying creaminess to this diner classic. Sorry bacon, no hard feelings, okay?

Ready in 5 minutes
Prep Time: 5 minutes
Serves 2

Ingredients
- 4 basil leaves, torn
- 1/2 avocado, pitted and mashed
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tomato
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1/2 a head of Boston bibb lettuce
- 4 pieces of multigrain bread, toasted
- sea salt

Directions

1. Cut tomato and lay out on a plate. Coat with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt.

2. Meanwhile, mash avocado in a medium bowl and then add lemon juice and torn basil. Mix until smooth.

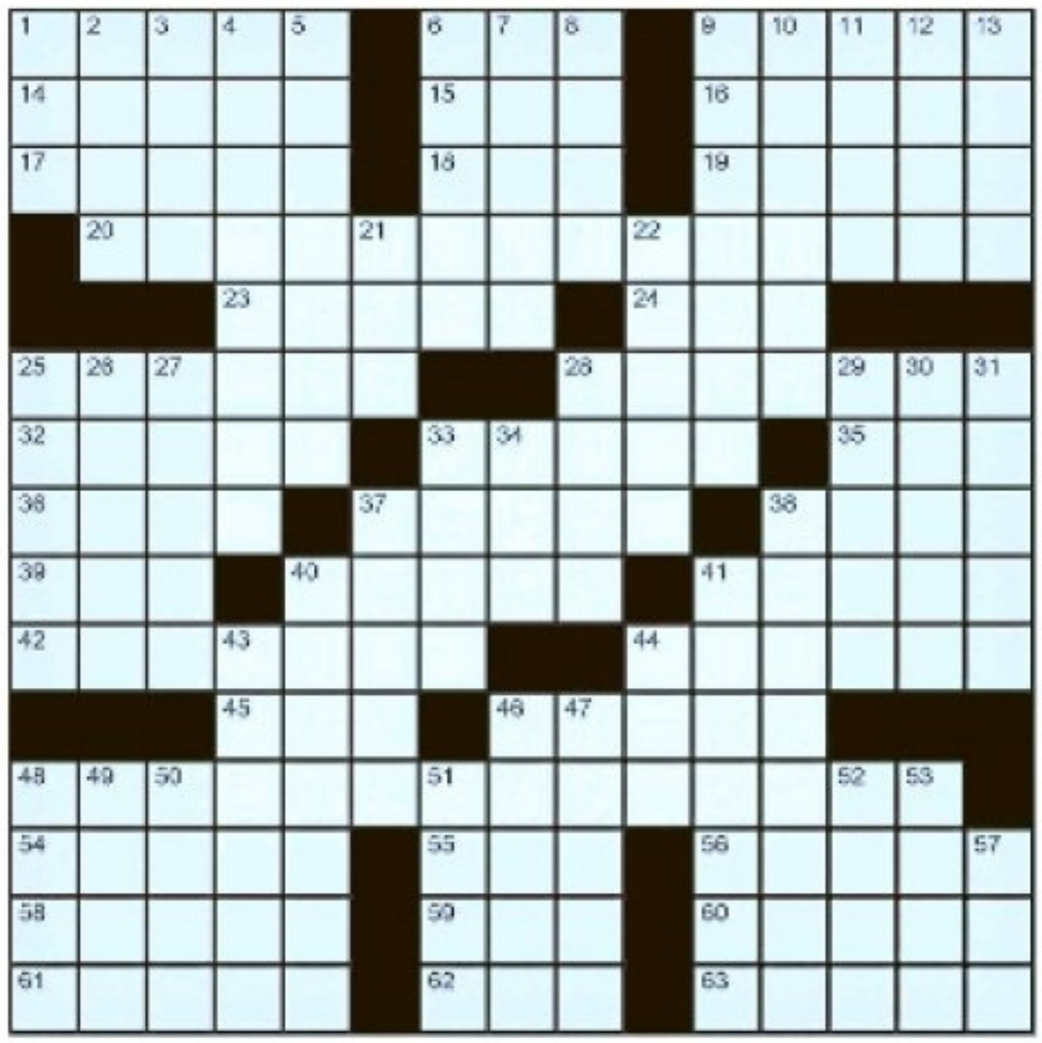
3. Toast bread and then smear about a tablespoon and a half of the avocado spread onto the bread. Finish by adding tomato slices and a few pieces of lettuce.

4. Cut in half or in quarters and serve with some cucumber slices.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Mell Lazarus comic strip
6. Noted botanist Mr. Gray
9. Sean of "Will & Grace"
14. __ closet
15. Mr. Aykroyd
16. Cherish
17. "Fortune is painted blind, with a muffler __ her eyes..." - Shakespeare
18. Backyard bug
19. Bona fide
20. Honoured Member of the Hockey Hall of Fame nicknamed 'The Big M': 2 wds.
23. Broadway star Ms. Menzel
24. Sundial number
25. Airport arrivees
28. Classic TV show for The Cartwright Family
32. Moray catcher, maybe
33. Piece of parsley
35. "That hurts!"
36. Candid pic-takers for tabloids
37. Really request
38. Ms. Turner of "The Sea Chase" (1955)
39. Informally seat, as in a theatre
40. Television pioneer, John Logie __ (b.1888 - d.1946)
41. __ eclipse
42. Artsy style of blouse or skirt
44. Mr. Sutherland
45. Submachine gun variety
46. Poseur
48. The Tragically Hip's current Juno-winning album: 3 wds.
54. Feminine inner self, in Jungian†psychology
55. Nero's 1101
56. Machu Picchu inhabitant
58. __ circle (Those in the know)
59. Ottawa, e.g.
60. 1960s rocker's jacket style
61. Heaps
62. Compass pt.
63. Small caves

DOWN
1. Commerce degree, shortly
2. Carl who composed the cantata "Carmina Burana"
3. Berth
4. Glacier's deposits
5. Revising person
6. "Frankly, my dear, I don't give __." - Rhett Butler
7. Yemen's capital city
8. Literary collection, briefly
9. Dividing
10. Fitting-here flower
11. Cartoon television Bear
12. Country singer Mr. Church
13. Mr. Rogen of movies
21. '__' __ for Kingston
22. Egg-shaped
25. Get vitalized: 2 wds.
26. Charter
27. 1st Greek letter
28. Mr. Garrett of "Everybody Loves Raymond"
29. Spiral-horned antelope
30. Districts-related
31. Grant
33. Incision
34. __ capita
37. "__ Room" (2002) starring Jodie Foster
38. Denizen of Ontario's 'Forest City'
40. Marketplaces like Istanbul's famous one
41. Dining on Cream of Mushroom or Vegetable Noodle or Lentil
43. Added up the numbers
44. Before-E's spelled out letter
46. Type sizes
47. Straight-billed marsh bird
48. Put a stamp on, then send the letter
49. AD part
50. One of Christopher Columbus' ships of 1492
51. RCN ship designation
52. Parrot
53. Store
57. Greek alphabet letters

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
This is a wonderful day for enjoying the company of friends, as well as the company of groups to which you belong. People are in a happy mood, and they are glad to see you.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You will be briefly high-viz today, but this attention will be favourable — so no worries. Enjoy your good press, because bosses, parents and VIPs will support you today.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You're excited about big travel plans. Similarly, some of you are just as excited about big plans for further training or education. Yes, you are going to expand your world!

Cancer June 22 - July 23
This is an excellent day to discuss shared property, taxes, debt and inheritances, because all parties will be fair and generous to each other. (And you likely will come out smelling like a rose.)

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
This is an excellent day to deal with partners and close friends. It's also a good day for business and working with members of the general public.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Work-related travel is likely today. Co-workers are supportive; plus, meetings, classes and groups will be positive experiences for you.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is a lovely day to enjoy the company of others — especially children — because you are in a warm, loving and playful mood. Expect to meet someone from another culture.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Matters related to home and family will be positive today. This also is a good day for a family business. A gathering at your home will be a success.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
It's easy for you to be upbeat and positive today, because you believe in yourself! This is important because for Sagittarians, optimism is a survival issue.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Business and commerce are favored today. Any financial arrangements you initiate will lead to future profits.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Today the Moon is in your sign, dancing with Jupiter, which is why you feel joyful and content. People will be happy to meet you and listen to your positive views.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You are content today. You realize that appreciating what you have is the key to happiness. (Negativity is wanting things to be different from the way they are.)

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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5	8						3	4
	1						6	
9			7		6			8
6			9		1			2
	3						1	
8	2						4	3
			5		9			

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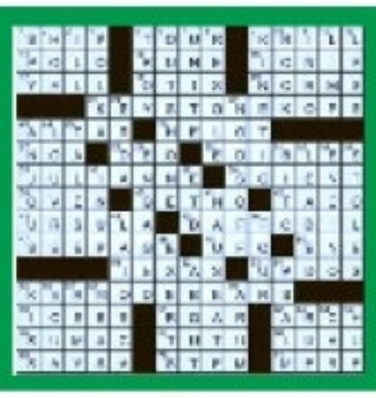

2	1	3	4	8	7	6	5	9
6	8	4	5	1	9	3	2	7
7	9	5	2	3	6	1	8	4
5	7	6	3	4	1	8	9	2
9	3	2	6	7	8	4	1	5
8	4	1	9	2	5	7	3	6
4	2	8	7	9	3	5	6	1
3	6	7	1	5	2	9	4	8
1	5	9	8	6	4	2	7	3

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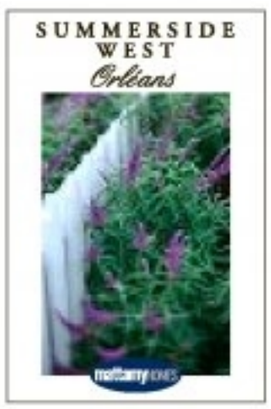

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